Progress Report – Challenge Paper Feedback

The Challenge Dialogue System™

INVENTORY PROGRAM REVIEW

A Challenge Dialogue with Stakeholders

This Progress Report describes and assesses the feedback received from *Inventory Program Review: A Challenge Dialogue with Stakeholders*. A complete list of all comments received is available in *Challenge Paper Consolidated Feedback*. Both documents and other background material regarding the Inventory Program Review are available at: www.for.gov.bc.ca/hts/inventory_prog_rev.htm

Your comments on this Progress Report are appreciated by May 31st, 2006. Please send to mailto:forests.forestanalysisbranchoffice@gov.bc.ca

The Progress Report along with your comments will be used to help focus discussions at an action-oriented workshop with client-stakeholders scheduled for May 24-25, 2006 in Richmond, BC.

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[1] This Progress Report is one of a number of tools developed by the Innovation Expedition for its Challenge Dialogue System™ — a disciplined process that engages diverse groups on discovering collaborative and innovative solutions to complex challenges. www.innovationexpedition.com.

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Purpose of this Report

This Progress Report is intended to provide:

- an overview synthesis of the range of feedback on the Challenge Paper (with sample quotes)
- a sense of where participants expressed significant alignment with ideas in the Challenge Paper and areas where there is confusion or disagreement or a desire for more information
- additional critical questions, ideas and suggestions that participants feel need addressing
- observations from a review of various forestry initiatives with inventory implications
- some initial reactions from the Inventory Program Review (IPR) Action Team to the feedback received and initiatives reviewed
- a first effort to refine the key components of the Challenge Paper — Key Challenge, Expected Outcomes, Critical Questions — based on participant feedback
- an introduction of some proposed Issues for moving the Dialogue forward in the next phase including the planned IPR workshop in Richmond on May 24-25, 2006.

Feedback Received

The amount and quality of the feedback from 49 individuals or groups has been most encouraging. The breakdown of the responses is 25 government (20 MOFR, 2 MOE, 2 ILMB, 1 Oil and Gas Commission), 7 industry, 13 consulting sector and 1 academia. All of the Challenge Paper feedback has been compiled un-attributed into a document titled *Challenge Paper Consolidated Feedback*. It is available on the IPR website http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hts/inventory_prog_rev.htm.

For the Action Team, this suggests that we have made a meaningful opening connection with a significant number of interested stakeholders and have attracted their initial involvement in this important review. We assume that among those who have not yet provided feedback, most if not all of you will still follow the Dialogue and will be interested in seeing how this journey evolves and where it might take us. Your comments on this Progress Report, like the Challenge Paper, would also be appreciated so we can see where there are clear areas of alignment, remaining areas of confusion and where there are clear differences in views.

We commit to honour and respect your contribution by:

- using your feedback to shape the next steps of the Dialogue
- working creatively to expand and sustain an open, frank Dialogue
- assisting participants to gain alignment around some priority ideas and action options and to build a plan to start implementing these ideas.

We invite you to hold us to this commitment.

Summary of Key Messages from the Dialogue

Reflecting overall on the Dialogue thus far, the following perspectives are advanced for your consideration as we turn our attention now to designing an effective IPR workshop on May 24-25, 2006 at the Executive Inn in Richmond.

Delivery Model, Funding and Capacity

The issues of mandate, governance model, roles and responsibilities between government, licensees and consultants, and funding are of universal concern to all Dialogue participants. They need to be addressed by the MOFR Executive and the Forest Investment Council, among possibly other key stakeholder beneficiaries of the inventory information. While these are important delivery model challenges that need to be dealt with, it is expected that the upcoming May 24-25, 2006 workshop is best to focus its attention more narrowly. The discussion will address the strategic direction the inventory should take to address current and near future priority business needs, the inventory content, approaches and tools. In other words what it will take to make sure we will have a healthy responsive inventory "system." These content ideas need to draw upon, as with this electronic Dialogue, from the collective expertise in industry, consultants and government. Being clear on the purpose of and vision for the inventory will then help inform discussions on the delivery model and funding.

Through this Dialogue, it is clear that stable funding is closely linked to improved capacity, training and the management of succession. These issues will be better addressed when clarity is provided on the inventory goals and delivery model.

The following themes are likely to form some of the main topics for the workshop and the focus of some post-workshop issue/opportunity teams.

Purpose of Inventory

Recurring questions from the Dialogue related to the purpose of the inventory included — who are the key clients?; what are their business needs?; what questions do they need answers to? what key vegetation inventory and G&Y information is needed to address these questions?; what scales of planning and decision-making is this information needed for? The Action Team suggests the following client categories.

1. Provincial Corporate Initiatives such as MPB, The New Relationship with Aboriginal People and Strategic Land Use Plan Implementation. In these cases the inventory is requested to provide decision-support for senior government officials. These initiatives invariably involve multiple government agencies and stakeholders at various levels in their organizations.

2. The Chief Forester when making AAC determinations including FAIB and licensees involved in TSR.

3. Licensees who prepare FSPs under FRPA and district managers who approve these plans, for example, to ensure landscape-level objectives are addressed.

4. MOFR staff responsible for State of Forests Reporting; various MOFR operational needs including protection, revenue, TIB, etc.; licensees who prepare SFMPs and provide C&I and targets; other agencies who need the inventory to support delivery of their Service Plan such as MOE regarding wildlife management and biodiversity conservation

Addressing most of the above topics involves "layering" the vegetation inventory with other resource inventories and information in order to obtain a more complete biophysical picture and subsequently a more complete analysis to support resource management decisions. Concerns were expressed in the Dialogue that the links between VRI and other inventories need improvement or that they be more fully integrated.

It will be important at the workshop to confirm and fine-tune the purpose of the inventory, to define key inventory clients and to understand the value of the inventory to these clients. This information will in turn help to inform decisions about the delivery model, funding and capacity. Another important topic will be how to improve linkages with other resource inventories.

Scope of Inventory Program Review

There was general support that the IPR address VRI, G&Y and site productivity but that it not address other inventories or related classification systems such as TEM or PEM. Nonetheless there is recognition of role of ecosystem mapping in estimating site productivity. In this regard, the Challenge Paper noted another companion Challenge Dialogue on ecosystem mapping that will be focused more on these topics in the next few months.

Seamless Provincial Coverage

There was general support that the VRI provide seamless coverage for the entire province including TFLs, parks and private land. Such a seamless coverage is needed for a variety of reasons including corporate-level resource questions that must cover large areas like MPB-affected areas, province-wide SOF reporting, land use plans for large regions and the like.

It is recognized that there are several key challenges in obtaining a seamless coverage including the acquisition of TFL data in a manner that is fair and equitable to tenure holders who may have paid for the inventory in whole or in part. There may be a need to consider innovative cost-effective ways to obtain perhaps a more limited 'core' set of attribute information for parks and private land. Options to address these challenges will be explored at the workshop.

Inventory for Sub-Strategic Applications

While the vegetation inventory has been implemented to support strategic, management unit-level applications, it is very clear from the responses that the inventory is and will continue to be used for sub-strategic applications such as for spatially explicit landscape unit-level planning. Legal requirements under FRPA are a key driver for these applications, for example, to assess the achievement of old growth retention targets. In no uncertain terms, many who responded stressed the importance of improving the inventory for these kinds of applications. Several innovative suggestions were offered regarding how this could be accomplished cost-effectively. These included the use of cruise data and satellite imagery. The need to "brainstorm" ideas and to identify pilot projects to test these ideas will be of great value at the workshop.

VRI Standards

A number of respondents felt some of the existing VRI standards are inflexible or inappropriate and that they need revision. There was also the question raised as to whether the standards should be more results-based and less prescriptive. Other perspectives included — that the standard is too expensive to apply and is not financially sustainable even if there is a substantial increase in funding (i.e., it is a "Cadillac" and a VRI "lite" option is needed); that the need, purpose and use of Phase 2 samples needs re-examination; that provisions for eco-attributes may be unnecessary as they seem to have limited use. If the VRI standard is to be revised, what are the key issues, what are the opportunities and who should be involved in changing the standard, asked some respondents. A workshop session that examines these kinds of issues and identifies solution options will help to move these challenges ahead.

Growth and Yield and Site Productivity

Strengthening G&Y and site productivity efforts in the province through some form of bona fide provincial program seems to be supported by several respondents. PSP re-measurement provides important information for G&Y models for unmanaged stands such as VDYP. The need to improve site productivity estimates for managed stands (that use the TIPSY model) based on local management unit-sampling is a key challenge often raised by the Chief Forester in TSR. Various tools have been used to assess the inherent productive capacity of forest sites including SIBEC and Site Index Adjustments (SIA), however there appears to be considerable confusion regarding what data and tools should be used for what purpose. There is also the issue of getting better assessments of Operational Adjustment Factors (OAFs) for managed stands.

A number of ideas have been offered in the Dialogue regarding these and other related G&Y-site productivity topics. A focused workshop session will be devoted to these important topic areas.

Action for Participants #1

Please use the separate IPR Progress Report Feedback Form to provide any additional reactions you might have prompted by the summary information above.

Concurrent Review of Inventory Implications of Some Key Forestry Initiatives

Concurrent with the Challenge Paper process, the Action Team also examined a range of forestry initiatives and their inventory implications. These included ecosystem-based management; coast forest challenges; interior log grade changes; FRPA developments; developments regarding Defined Forest Management Area (DFAM); FIA funding, Sustainable Forest Management Planning (SFMP); State of Forest Reporting (SOF); the Future Forest Ecosystems of BC initiative of the Chief Forester; and, few miscellaneous items. The findings from this study are in a report titled *Selected Forestry Initiatives with Inventory Implications*. It is posted on the IPR website at: http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hts/inventory_prog_rev.htm.

You are also reminded of the findings of an earlier *Review of Inventory Issues Identified in Timber Supply Review AAC Rationales*. This document is also on the IPR website at: Inventory_Program_Review\TSR Inver ry Issues Report.pdf

Challenge Paper Feedback by Section

1. Foreword

The Challenge Paper –Foreword Section that provided background on the IPR including its proposed *scope* and some *starting perspectives* of the Action Team.

There was general support for the proposed "vegetation" scope of the review namely the Vegetation Resource Inventory (VRI) including growth and yield (G&Y), site productivity and related vegetation assessments. It was pointed out that the VRI maps and describes non-forested areas so these areas should also be in-scope.

Some respondents stressed the need to link-in other inventories more explicitly and related to this that the concept of total [multiple] resource inventories should be explored.

> *"What about the concept of total resource inventories rather than just vegetation inventories. Managers today need to consider all resources affected by their planning not just vegetation. With new technology, it is possible to inventory all resources so that a more integrated approach to resource management is facilitated. This approach is more cost effective than people might imagine."*

> *"... Does not include rangelands" Last time I looked, MoFR has broad definitions of forest land and range land, such that they overlap considerably. Although current VRI efforts may not focus on rangelands, they most certainly map and classify them."*

Also noted was the importance to link the IPR with other initiatives such as Mountain Pine Beetle-related activities and any climate change work.

There was concern by some that the Challenge Dialogue seems to speak mainly to high level "program delivery issues" such as governance, funding, delivery model, user needs and applications. They feel there should be an opportunity at some point (if not with the IPR then when?) to review detailed "technical issues" related to VRI like Phase 1 photo interpretation, Phase 2 ground sampling, Net Volume Adjustment Factors (NVAF), etc. In this regard, many technical issues and ideas were provided.

> *"FAIB should consider some methodology to apply more intensive sampling in some circumstances to provide higher resolution data for stand level use."*

> [need to]...*identify the impact of obsolete or inadequate products, inventory methodologies and assumptions on optimum and usable products and current short-falls in inventory deliverables."*

> *"(VRI) standards should set targets in terms of results rather than prescribe a specified method of producing an outcome. What is more important? The process or the quality, contents and usefulness of the resultant products?"*

Several respondents had considerable background in VRI and provided a number of important comments that helped clarify the *starting perspectives* in the Foreword Section.

> *"Usually people do not have much success in trying to be all things to all people. So I do not like the chances of the Inventory Program doing so. Let's decide what is our core business and let the "nice to do" stuff to be funded by the periodic funding bonanzas that come along like FRDA, FRBC etc."*

> *We grow and log trees. We can see trees from the air. Let the inventory speak to their location, size and the productivity of the site to which they are growing.*

> *"I think the problem with the current inventory model is that there is no clarity around what the inventory is to be used for. If we knew what it was intended to be used for it is relatively easy to develop a program to address the stated needs. Do we want polygon, landscape unit or management unit resolution to answer what questions?"*

> *"The business case that I would prefer is one that assesses the real risk to the province stewardship mandate without an adequate, technically sound, well funded provincial inventory. The technical model exists – it is the implementation and financial commitment that is lacking."*

> *"A huge issue is not mentioned at all, and that is access to the inventories collected. In general there seems to be an unstated assumption that the primary users are for the most part found with MOFR (and mostly focused on TSR). In fact I would suggest that VRI is the only province-wide vegetation inventory we have and as such it is the defacto choice for all agencies, industries, interest groups, First Nations, etc., for which vegetation cover is relevant to their business."*

> *"VRI is not only important to the forest sector, i.e. industry, but also to the entire spectrum of planning, operations, economic development, research, conservation and protection of all provincial forest lands. It is the key foundation along with spatial map base....and most other derived data/inventories, analysis and decision-making depend."*

The statement — "The inventory therefore must be regularly updated and periodically re-inventoried when and where there is a demand for the inventory to be more current." provoked the following reaction.

"The notion that an inventory needs to be redone to be more current is very old thinking. Given that the original inventory was well done, that we maintain the currency of the inventory for change through an annual or biannual update cycle, that we project the inventory for yield changes with reasonable yield models, then currency is not an issue."

Some participants strongly disagreed with the assertion that the "delivery model is not well suited…to vegetation inventory." The view here is that limited funding, not the delivery model per se, was the key issue in the past that hampered support for the inventory. And, licensees have done the best they could under difficult fiscal circumstances to address the inventory where possible. Further it was suggested that a recent decision to dedicate FIA funds "off the top" to ensure a more coordinated inventory effort provincially, would provide more stable funding to better support the existing delivery model.

The Challenge Paper stated that licensees are responsible for funding inventory on TFLs. However, it was pointed out that TFL inventory activity has often been directly related to various government funding programs over the years including section 88, FRBC and FIA. It was noted that the initial FRBC requirement for industry cost-sharing of inventories on TFLs was dropped early on in the process. Related to this, other feedback noted that *"access to licensees' inventories"… "is an important issue for land use planning."*

In consideration of this feedback, the Action Team proposes to continue to focus the scope of the IPR on the "vegetation" inventory, as proposed in the Challenge Dialogue, but being aware of the important linkages to other inventories and data sets that are needed by resource managers. We recognize that the VRI often must be used with other resource information data sets to support decision-making.

It is clear from the feedback that a key aspect of the IPR is to clearly identify who the primary "clients" are. The inventory might be better designed and delivered to support their needs first. Having said that, there it is also recognized that there are other important clients, an example being where there is a legislative requirement to use the inventory to make substantive sustainability decisions such as the Chief Foresters' determinations of an AAC in TSAs and TFLs. And there are many other users whose inventory requirements need to prioritized when making a balanced decision about where and how to improve the inventory.

The Action Team acknowledges that the IPR needs to examine program delivery issues — governance and coordination, funding, roles and responsibilities, etc. — but it should also address technical issues, that when resolved will make the inventory more useful, usable, accessible and cost effective. These technical, programmatic and organizational challenges are often interlinked.

Action for Participants #2

Please use the separate IPR Progress Report Feedback Form to provide any further reactions to the responses to the Challenge Paper Foreward Section.

2. Key Challenge Statement

There was general alignment among the participants with the Key Challenge Statement.

> *"…I think it is a good starting point." "… the concerns and needs of the Protection program can be met."*

There were suggestions for improving the Key Challenge.

> *"The Challenge Statement is clear and well written but appears to assume the stakeholders' prior knowledge and understanding of the framework and structure of the existing VRI system including the scope and limitation of use affecting different resource management objectives and planning decision levels."*
>
> *"…nothing be thrown out until all major stakeholders really appreciate and understand what the current VRI 'baby' is."*
>
> *"Some times a review of an existing process, with the goal to 'make it better', establishes unnecessary sideboards and reduces the chance of coming up with revolutionary improvements."*
>
> *"The Key Challenge statement gives me the idea you are really only looking at a "tweaking" of the inventory program, rather than critically looking at whether it truly meets the requirements of today and the future."*
>
> *"The Challenge Statement may just want to state that the inventory system will be designed to meet today's and future business need in the most cost effective manner."*
>
> *"If through the review it is decided that improvements are needed, an achievable but useable time-frame should be identified for the work so that it does not become an unending project."*
>
> *"Our challenge should be: focus scarce resources on a targeted and specific inventory. We do not want to make the focus too broad or too costly."*
>
> *"Looking at the history of episodic and fluctuating funding for inventory (i.e. feast or famine) infers that cost is all important and that we should plan for fluctuating funding rather than hope and wish for a more stable funding world."*
>
> *"A major component of the program review and Challenge Paper is dedicated to Growth and Yield"* [and this needs to be reflected in Challenge Statement.

A few are concerned that the Challenge Dialogue will not produce meaningful results.

> *"…unless there is the willingness to follow through on recommendations, i.e. resource issues and executive support for change – then all this is simply dialogue among peers."*
>
> *"As it stands I think the Key Challenge statement should stand as is – its fine. However ...both the Forest Resources Inventory Committee (FRIC) and the succeeding Business Information Management Group (BIMG) …had fine opening statements too – but neither went anywhere. It seems that when the "rubber is ready to hit the road" on these things the process fizzles out."*

The responses generally imply that the vegetation inventory design is reasonably solid and likely can answer the business needs but lack of funds have hindered delivery of the inventory. The vegetation inventory itself is not well understood however. Training and extension to create a better understanding of the inventory along with the provision of more stable funding should address these key obstacles.

Alternative views are that the design should be revisited in order to better meet the needs of today's and tomorrow's many users. Likely both views have merit, namely that the current system does need to be better understood and resourced, while innovative ways to improve it should also be explored particularly in light of some of the new resource questions being asked.

Funding for inventory has fluctuated widely. A number of responses stressed the importance of having more stable funding. This was seen to be a key factor for obtaining a more effective inventory program. Recently, the Forest Investment Council has endorsed in-principle a more stable funding model using FIA funding.

Revised Key Challenge Statement — Based on the feedback, the Key Challenge Statement is revised as follows (the main changes are underlined):

> **To undertake a full and open review of the current implementation of the vegetation inventory program, <u>including growth and yield,</u> in order to examine how well it meets current and future information needs and how it can be improved to address these needs better:**
>
> - **by engaging a range of inventory stakeholders in a structured dialogue to establish a common <u>understanding of the vegetation inventory,</u> test assumptions, ask important questions, identify <u>specific</u> issues and opportunities;**
> - **by drawing upon the expertise of technical inventory professionals in the public and private sector to respond to opportunities to improve processes and products and to address identified gaps <u>in a cost-effective manner</u>;**
> - **by striking a balance between thinking outside the box and recognizing where current systems continue to serve our needs well (not throwing the baby out with the bath water);**
> - **by balancing desired change with affordability <u>to meet today's and future business needs</u>. We will never eliminate risk, but we must manage it;**
> - **<u>by using the feedback of the dialogue to determine the priority action options and recommendations of the inventory community (users and providers) that are achievable within a clear timeframe.</u>**

Action for Participants #3

Please use the separate IPR Progress Report Feedback Form to provide any additional reactions prompted by the revised Key Challenge Statement.

3. Expected Outcomes and Dialogue Success Factors

Expected Outcomes — Several constructive comments were provided on the five Expected Outcomes. There was generally strong support for and emphasis on outcome #5 — a renewed strategic direction (vision, mission and mandate) for the province's vegetation inventory program.

> *"The expected outcomes do not appear to address the paradigm of 'results-based' forest management....the focus is not on the managing the how we do it but on the results generated from the actions. If we apply this model to resource inventory...how would that affect the capturing of a province wide data set and how would government pull this together, or would they have to?"*
>
> *"The expected outcomes are confusing as they seem to overlap with one another. Outcome #1 is a broad, all encompassing statement, outcomes #2 and 4 state similar things and outcome #3 is a component of #1. Revised wording of outcomes kindly* provided.
>
> *"What will be the vegetation inventory standards and specifications, the scheduling/timing and funding vehicle?*
>
> *"Item 1 would be more informative if emphasis shifts from acquiring a 'broad view...information needs', to a compartmentalized case by case comprehensive picture of information needs of stakeholders as well as, definition of program delivery option."*
>
> *"... would love to see a renewed strategic direction – financially supported with a commitment to make it happen."*

Revised Expected Outcomes — Based on the feedback, the Expected Outcomes are revised as follows.

1. **A clear objective assessment of current and anticipated vegetation inventory information needs, issues and opportunities;**
2. **Identification and assessment of action options, including results-based approaches to address the needs, issues and opportunities (from '1');**
3. **A business case for vegetation inventory investments considering a range of inventory stakeholder benefits; and**
4. **A renewed strategic direction (vision, principles and collective mandate) and action (implementation) plan for the BC's vegetation inventory program in the near- (1-2 year), medium (3-5 year) and long-term (5+).**

Action for Participants #4

Please use the separate IPR Progress Report Feedback Form to provide any further reactions you have to this revised Expected Outcomes.

Challenge Dialogue Success Factors — Several important and interesting responses surfaced from the question: "I would consider this Dialogue a success if..."

There is strong desire to have a clear champion for the inventory program and that this should probably be the Chief Forester. A common refrain is that the inventory 'seamlessly'

cover the entire province — all forms of public and private land, and that there should be a specified time-table and action plan to accomplish this with stable funding and resourcing.

A recurring view from many is that there needs to very specific reasons articulated as to why we have a vegetation inventory and who it is to primarily serve (i.e., who are the key clients?). Being explicit about this will provide a clear scope for the business case for the inventory. There is universal recognition that the inventory is vital for supporting of strategic questions such as for land use planning and TSR. There are also strong views that the inventory needs to become more capable of supporting operational planning and decision-making.

Virtually everyone feels that the roles and responsibilities of the inventory community — licensees, consultants and government (district, region and branch) — need to be clarified for all functions of the inventory system.

While this dialogue is a good start, some emphasize that such a discourse should be more regular. There is skepticism however that dialogue alone will not lead to effective changes and that success needs to be measured by clear actions and time-lines with tangible improvements to inventory processes and products.

> *"...the Chief Forester, as the primary client of the VRI through TSR – AAC determinations, takes responsibility for the inventory of the province...to secure regular, steady staffing and funding to deliver a provincial VRI that is current, complete and statistically robust. The inventory needs a champion."*
>
> *"...the inventory program can be streamlined to give cost effective, relevant information for all aspects of forest management, including issues at an operational scale."*
>
> *"...it leads to all major stakeholders in BC forest and vegetation inventory being truly aware of the benefits and weaknesses of the current VRI program."*
>
> [there is] *"...clarification and definition of policy on joint stewardship responsibilities and obligations related to inventory and relative initiatives (G&Y, monitoring)..."*
>
> *"...government and industry recognize that this VRI Inventory Program must be for all lands (crown, private, parks, TFL) of the province ...."*
>
> *"...it resulted in a more consistent and functional inventory as well as stable funding for maintenance and updates of the inventory."*
>
> *"...the end result was a list of realistic objectives that could be achieve in a reasonable time frame, to better support strategic initiatives such as TSR and land use planning."*
>
> *"..opportunity to provide input extends beyond (the) Challenge Dialogue."*
>
> *"..the real issues and barriers facing the province's vegetation inventory program in fulfilling the stewardship responsibilities...were linked more consistently with business drivers (considered part of the same rather than separate entities)."*
>
> *"...you get a large number of responses with good feedback from a wide cross-section of the natural resource community including industry, government, academia and others."*
>
> *"...it is recognized that to be successful inventories must be designed for both strategic and operational applications, not just strategic uses."*

"...it resulted in a recognition of the crucial importance of up-to-date, reliable, consistent forest inventory across the entire land base....(and lead to)..adequate, stable funding and resourcing being dedicated to its achievement over the next 5 to 10 years."

"...it leads to agreement regarding identification and document of the mission and mandate of MOFR in regards to Vegetation Inventory and G&Y and its responsibilities and roles."

"...and when change takes place. Until that point the dialogue is simply dialogue (lip service) and can be too easily forgotten and/or ignored."

Action for Participants #5

Please use the separate IPR Progress Report Feedback Form to provide any further reactions you have to this summary of Challenge Dialogue Success Factors.

4. Background Issues and Events

A number of useful comments were offered in response to background issues and events that instigated the IPR. While the detailed feedback for each numbered background statement is provided in the separate *Challenge Paper Consolidated Feedback* document, which includes some suggested corrections where there were 'errors in fact', following are some 'high level' observations noted by the Action Team.

General comments

The long list of background issues and events was viewed to be helpful for a number of the respondents to get everyone on the same page. Some noted that the complexity of the material underscores the need for the IPR and an ensuing inventory strategy that would see the inventory community collaborating better towards a common vision and set of goals.

Some feedback noted missing information items that warrant further discussion. These included FRPA, FREP (FRPA Resource Evaluation Program), FRPA-related designations such as ungulate winter ranges, old growth management areas, scenic areas/VQOs. It was suggested that the Inventory Audits conducted in the 1990's should be mentioned since they report on inventory accuracy and note the strengths and weaknesses of the inventories at a management unit level.

One respondent felt that the long list of background events tended to mask the real problems with the inventory program such as — declining funding and staffing; removal of operational funding and reliance on "soft" incremental funding; the Core Review decision in 2001 that government would no longer conduct inventories; and organizational changes when the inventory function was moved from MOF to MSRM.

4.1 IPR-Related Initiatives

Related initiatives to the IPR that might warrant consideration included — ecosystem based management in the Central and North Coast LRMP areas, species-at-risk, SOF reporting, criteria and indicators, oil and gas activities, links to genetic resource inventories, critical importance for inventory and monitoring in MPB impacted areas, and the concern that MPB impacts may dilute attention away from non-MPB impacted areas that need inventory attention. It was noted that many of the concerns about the adequacy of the inventory to support key initiatives such as Timber Supply Review boil down to being a funding issue.

4.2 Vegetation Inventory

A number of reactions and ideas were stimulated by the discussion in the vegetation inventory background information including — need for updated VRI for all districts; that BC-wide issues requires consistent BC-wide information (i.e., a seamless provincial coverage); inventory and updates might employ remote sensing and image processing capabilities more; viewing the inventory as an operational support requirement just like cruising or cutblock layout; need to reconcile strategic purpose of the inventory and its use for sub-strategic applications; questioning why Phase 2 polygon variation (WPV) sampling is not employed in VRI; need to capture impacts of other sectors such as oil and gas on the inventory; updating the inventory due to small scale salvage and links to RESULTS; use/non-use of eco-attributes in VRI (are they needed?).

A number of respondents feel strongly that spatially explicit modeling, analysis and planning is increasing in importance and that the vegetation inventory information — the "best available information" — is being used for more operational planning even though it was designed for strategic, management unit-level applications. The view is that there is no point trying to get users to not use the inventory for sub-strategic, landscape level purposes. Rather they would say the inventory has to recognize this reality and improve its accuracy accordingly.

Other miscellaneous items included more direction on site index or productivity — for example, definitions of 'height'; questions regarding the number of ground samples; the need to monitor G&Y model outputs based on genetic gains; the need for improved descriptions of young stands; and a monitoring program for OAFs using phase 2-like plots. Some respondents supported legislation in the Forest Act to return the requirement to maintain the inventory to the Chief Forester. Eco-attribute data are not often collected due to their expense and unclear application, it was suggested by some.

4.3 Growth and Yield

G&Y did not garner many comments in relation to inventory. There was general recognition of the importance of G&Y information, including Permanent Sample Plots (PSPs), to improve stand models such as VDYP. It appears there is general confusion in some cases over G&Y terms and applications and a lack of awareness of the current G&Y situation. While little G&Y investment has occurred recently within the inventory program, Research Branch and other institutions have continued to work on G&Y through other support such as the FIA-Forest

Science Program. These activities and accomplishments appear not to have been communicated well to the inventory community. Some of the comments indicate the Challenge Paper may have been biased toward the FAIB G&Y program (VDYP, PSPs) as evidenced by fewer references to managed stand components.

Issues that were raised included — concern about possible bias of G&Y plots in well stocked stands that may not be representative of the forest; the need to use TIPSY models to project inventories in managed stands (as done in TSR); the need to better address mortality losses and growth in mixed wood stands; philosophical differences with respect to the role of PSPs; industry view that TSA G&Y is a government responsibility; and the updating of G&Y models based on genetic gain assumptions.

4.4 Related Inventories

A number of respondents recognized the importance of linking VRI to allied inventories for analysis purposes; for example, to ecological mapping (TEM and PEM), road mapping and land use inventories.

Action for Participants #6

Please use the separate IPR Progress Report Feedback Form to provide any further reactions you have to responses to the Background Issues and Events in the Challenge Paper.

5. Assumptions

The list of assumptions was designed to stimulate a wide variety of reactions and suggestions and to surface differing experiences, perceptions, priorities and knowledge from the participants. In order to get alignment as a group around some action options, we need to understand these differences and how they can be used gain greater insights. As we had hoped, the list of assumptions stimulated a vigorous expression of ideas, questions, concerns and suggestions. While the detailed feedback for each numbered assumption is provided in the separate *Challenge Paper Consolidated Feedback*, following are some 'high level' observations noted by the Action Team.

5.1 Mandate

There is clear interest in clarifying who is responsible for the inventory with suggestions that the legislative responsibility be restored in the *Forest Act*.

> *"..the removal of the legislative mandate under Section 2 of the Forest Act, "The Chief Forester shall develop and maintain an inventory of the forest and lands of the Province" meant that no one was ultimately responsible or in charge of this function any more and this sent out the message that it was not of much significance to the business of government."*

5.2 Clients and Business Drivers

There is general support that the IPR process should clarify who the key clients are for which the inventory should be designed to serve. Knowing explicitly who the client group(s) are should help focus the inventory effort. We know there are many varied current users and we know there are many unknown users. The IPR team sees at least four broad categories of users/applications of the inventory information: (a) provincial corporate-level initiatives such as questions around the state of MPB areas and their management; (b) TSR and AAC determinations; (c) FRPA decisions regarding FSPs and government objectives where landscape-level information may be vital; and (d) non-legal but province-wide and regional applications such as SOF/SOE reporting, strategic land use plans, tactical-level SFMPs by licensees, and operational-level development plans. We encourage your reaction to these categories.

5.3 Delivery Model vs. Funding

Some feel the FIA delivery model has not worked particularly well. Others feel that the real issue has been the inadequacy of funding. There is a view that recent FIA program decisions regarding the inventory have addressed key deficiencies in the delivery model. One option is to continue with FIA Land Base Investment Rationale (LBIR) approach by licensees/BCTS for MU-level decision-making while leaving some funds available to address any key inventory gaps. Identification of these gaps would be guided by some form of multi-stakeholder governance model and decision process that reconciles provincial-, regional- and district-level priorities.

5.4 Roles and Responsibilities

There is a strongly expressed need to clarify roles and responsibilities of government, industry, inventory consultants and other stakeholders in all aspects of the inventory process. Also there is a need to clarify roles and responsibilities within MOFR at the district, regional and Branch level. Roles and responsibilities should flow logically with a better understanding of who the primary clients are, the business needs and the responsibilities for inventory mandate.

5.5 Use of VRI

It seems clear that the VRI, whether it should be or not, will be used to support spatially explicit planning and timber supply review at the landscape-level for a variety of important reasons. This suggests that we need to examine innovative ways to improve the reliability of the inventory to support these applications in a cost-effective manner. These applications should help to improve and refine strategic resource objectives that may not discernable in individual operational plans (e.g., old growth retention targets). Tied to this, it will also be important to make sure that users are well aware of the reliability of the inventory information in their area.

5.6 VRI and ecological data/mapping

There has been little collection of ecological data in Phase 2 sampling for a number of reasons. At the same time, there is recognition that VRI is a very important information source for BEC, TEM and PEM mapping and that these in turn help to support the interpretation of site productivity and non-timber values. Clarity is needed on the linkages between these systems to avoid duplication and optimize the complementarities of their information content.

5.7 VRI coverage

While support was expressed for a seamless provincial inventory that includes all Crown lands and private lands, a number of potential barriers were identified not the least of which is — "who pays for this?" The IPR needs to examine this issue carefully to identify fair and workable options.

5.8 VRI fine-tuning vs. overhaul

Some feel the original VRI design includes considerable flexibility and, perhaps with a little fine-tuning, can address today's needs. Others are not so sure. They feel the IPR should be open to approaches that are radically different, provided they focus on client needs and are cost-effective. We feel both views have merit. In the short-term we need to make VRI more responsive to immediate needs and the current situation. For the medium- to longer-term, it is also probably worth taking a fresh look at current methods in relation to a number of new and emerging questions and technologies. We should be open to quickly piloting different approaches to test their feasibility.

5.9 G&Y

There is generally strong support for G&Y work but also the recognition that this important function needs to be reviewed carefully to ensure it supports the overall inventory program and the questions it must be able to answer now and in the foreseeable future. It is clear that there is still considerable confusion with how all the various G&Y, site productivity and adjustment factor components are supposed to work together.

5.10 Loss of expertise

There is the prevailing view that we have lost considerable expertise in government, industry and the consulting community in recent years. This is due to factors such as lack of funding, downsizing and retirements. Proactive planning and renewed efforts to recruit and train personnel will be needed. Increased funding should help address this but it nevertheless will remain a key challenge.

Action for Participants #7

Please use the separate IPR Progress Report Feedback Form to provide any further reactions you have to responses to the Assumptions in the Challenge Paper.

Critical Questions

The Critical Questions listed in the Challenge Paper were intended to elicit further ideas from the participants and strengthen the focus of the IPR. There was considerable feedback on the 14 questions asked, and those responses are provided in the separate *Challenge Paper Consolidated Feedback* document. Highlights from the feedback are provided below.

6.1 Inventory Program Review

There was general support that the IPR is appropriate, timely and useful, and that it should include G&Y. There is an expectation that the review will lead to real results that improve the inventory in terms of quality (accuracy) and cost-effectiveness.

Concern was raised, based on past experience, that the review may only be talk and that it will not lead to effective change. An important outcome of the review should be a stakeholder-supported action plan with clear timeframes.

There was some concern about a possible government bias in the review process and of the importance to undertake the review with 'open eyes'.

Related to scope, some expressed the importance of considering PEM and TEM and MPB inventory work, since there are synergies to be gained in doing so. Better linkages are needed to oil and gas activities in NE BC given the extensive area of forests disturbed. There is also a need for improved knowledge about mixedwood stands, Call Grade Net Factor (CGNF) appraisal cruising and the evolving role of the (ASTT – Applied Science Technologists and Technicians) Forest Measurements Registration Board.

Related to question, *"this review would be worthwhile if…?"*, feedback included:

- inventory data becomes more accurate and up-to-date;
- an action plan is developed to streamline the inventory program and provide cost-effective, relevant information in support of forest management including the operational scale;
- an action plan with an acceptable timeframe is supported by the major stakeholders;
- clarity is provided on what questions we need to answer with a plan to make it happen;
- decision-makers realize the benefits to inventories;
- the inventory is funded to a level that will achieve provincial coverage updated over time;

- the need is recognized that the inventory must be designed for both strategic and operational applications (particularly since strategic objectives can drive operational activity and therefore need to be based on realistic information and evaluated for their cumulative effects at several scales); and
- there is clear accountability for the program.

6.2 Today's Priority Business Needs

Feedback included the need to define what the program should be province-wide for next 15+ years and then get a long-term commitment from government to fund that program.

In terms of priority business needs, feedback comments included:

- reliable projections of wood supply for AAC determinations including mixed stands and stands affected by the MPB;
- information that supports legal/quasi-legal obligations such as FRPA/FSPs and SFM C&I;
- information that can be used operational particularly at the landscape-level;
- better information about expected timber attributes such as piece size and quality;
- information in support of ecosystem-based management, habitat supply analysis, harvest planning, growth and yield;
- sufficient information to facilitate all major forest activities including protection, silviculture, engineering, planning, modeling;
- spatially accurate information for management of non-timber resource values;
- reliable information to support several critical MPB decisions (e.g., short-and mid-term timber supply, where to harvest, what to retain);
- information in support of PEM/TEM;
- complete provincial coverage including parks and TFLs;
- upgraded information for older inventoried areas;
- capability to move the inventory from strategic (MU) to landscape-level;
- information to support important issues and initiatives such as climate change and ecosystem-based management; and
- continuing to establish long-term G&Y monitoring plots.

More specifically regarding inventory data needs, feedback included:

- knowing the age of the inventory and when it was last updated;
- accurate species, age and height information on a drainage basis with accurate volumes on stands over 40 years old;
- good description of disturbed stands in the interior and partially harvested stands on coast;
- assessing areas and volumes impacted by other activities such as oil and gas;
- change in inventory due to dead trees and in-growth in MPB areas; and
- integrating tree-level (stand and stock table) information into the inventory.

6.3 Future Business Needs

In terms of future business needs, feedback comments included:

- need for a fully automated real-time system of updating the inventory within 5 years;
- using inventory to help make projections for non-timber values;
- continually improving the inventory by assessing weaknesses;
- G&Y on mixed wood stands in MPB areas in 5 years; providing accuracy below the MU level;
- rebuilding the inventory expertise in BC;
- rationalizing vegetation classifications given climate change;
- better integrating G&Y into VRI to better assess timber supply;
- better understanding the MPB outbreak including understory stocking and monitoring; improved communication and sharing of resource inventories between resource users;
- better understanding ecosystem services (carbon credits, genetic diversity, tree improvement);
- keeping inventory process flexible to consider different products from the forest;
- supporting both operational and strategic decisions that affect forests and communities; and
- merging ecosystem and VRI mapping and monitoring plots that track change.

6.4 Priority Inventory Services and Products

Feedback identified need for:

- reliable watershed-level estimates for use in planning as well as for serving strategic AAC decisions;
- up-to-date inventories with new inventories where needed, and new provincial G&Y systems;
- user-friendly access to data, revitalized site productivity, G&Y, NVAF and ecological mapping activities; and
- clear accountability and improved funding for the inventory and descriptions of what it is and how it is being used.

6.5 Risks and Gaps in Existing Inventory

Ideas provided in the feedback included:

- a central user-friendly depository for all inventory information where updates could be provided by different users (government and licensees) to a similar standard by qualified staff;
- need for more detail to allow for spatial planning at a local level;
- considering user needs in the nature and frequency of updates;
- filling gaps in G&Y regionally and/or provincially;
- addressing "gaps" in the inventory strategically at the provincial level;

- deciding what is "core" information that users need province-wide as a government obligation to fund, whereas other needs are funded by the user interest group;
- drive assessment needs based on management unit needs not by a provincial standard;
- address gaps in inventory such as disturbances by oil and gas;
- better link inventory to tree improvement (e.g. genetic gains, genetic diversity);
- consider layering/linking other data such as linework for fires and RESULTS to inventory rather than incorporating that work directly into the inventory (e.g. it wasn't done to same standard); and
- improving other inventories such as wildlife where needed.

6.6 TFL, Park & Private Land Inventories – Seamless Inventory

Feedback generally strongly supported the need for having a seamless provincial inventory for the entire province including TFLs, parks and protected areas, and private land. Ideas to get there included:

- don't download the funding responsibility to industry;
- identify "core" TFL data to be included leaving additional data as proprietary to licensee and/or as supplemental to the provincial VRI database;
- compensate the TFL holder for the inventory data that they paid for (i.e. where public funds were not used);
- recognition of importance of basic inventory information in parks from a wildlife and biodiversity perspective and better coordinating with BC Parks to acquire this information; exploring ways MOE/BC Parks could help fund the inventory in parks.

One respondent noted the need for a seamless provincial inventory was a key recommendation of both the Forest Resources Commission in 1991 and the Timber Inventory Task Force in 1992 yet was never implemented over the ensuing 15 years.

To help ensure we get seamless provincial coverage in a cost effective manner, some feel the "standards" should be flexible ("lighter") related to data collected in larger parks and private land including extended update schedules to reduce costs (e.g., consider satellite algorithms for creating and updating inventories on private land and parks; photo-interpreted larger polygon delineations with no or little field work unless BC Parks pays for it). Others feel the entire province should be covered to same VRI standard regardless of land status, and that this will help save time and money later by avoiding data incompatibilities that might arise.

Other feedback felt that the goal of a provincial seamless inventory is too large a step at this time. The view is that many land use planning issues are at the landscape unit (LU) level and that priorization of seamless coverage should be on this LU-level based on need. Finally, there was the perspective that we should focus the seamless coverage effort on all Crown lands, but not private lands.

6.7 Accuracy Expectations

Expectations included:

- realization that the inventory will be used for landscape unit planning applications so efforts need to be made to improve its accuracy for these applications;
- accuracy sufficient to undertake and assess plans at the watershed or landscape-level, for example, related to age and species composition;
- include metadata information that states reliability; and
- assess inventory to identify and address areas in need of improvement.

In order to provide a more accurate inventory at the watershed level, suggestions included

- more emphasis in the Phase 1 on key data such as species, age and height when polygons (stands) are delineated and described;
- not undertaking Phase 2 but using those funds to improve Phase 1 (e.g., enabling the photo-interpreters in Phase 1 to undertake more field observations;
- using higher quality photos;
- having more plots and incorporating local information over time to continually improve the inventory (as opposed to replacing the inventory every 20-40 years);
- using imagery (such as SPOT 5) to update inventory for cutblocks, roads and other disturbances;
- capturing cruise data (particularly given that they are becoming more similar to VRI standards) to model improvements in the inventory;
- using cruise and scale information to test the accuracy of the inventory (e.g. related to volume yield predictions) so that areas of improvement can be identified and addressed.

Although most responses support the inventory being reliable for sub-strategic (landscape/watershed-level) planning and not for stand-level applications, some feel efforts should be made to promote accuracy at the stand (polygon) level. Others feel that this can not be achieved at reasonable costs.

For G&Y and NVAF, suggestions are for more samples. Innovative ways to reduce costs seem harder to find in this area.

6.8 Information Access

General feedback is that access to information has improved for those who have been technically trained to do so and regularly use the data. However for occasional or new non-technical users, the required training can be a formidable obstacle to the effective use of the inventories.

Responses included:

- how can we direct staff and users to find the data easily (e.g., there do not appear to be MOFR regional or district web-links to inventory websites);

- how can we access other government data such as oil and gas where it effects the inventory; free access for all inventories and data on LRDW (i.e., the cost/ benefit of fees for information should be compared to the revenue that government receives);
- improving data sharing agreements;
- ensuring more timely access to information so that it is current and not already out-of-date;
- providing information about the VRI program and how users can access the data;
- having a newsletter article for FORREX's LINK that describes how data can be accessed;
- allowing the data on the internet to be accessible for use and manipulation to better serve client-needs.

"Access has greatly improved with the advent of the LRDW. While some tweaks could be done to the system this is generally a success story."

"There still seems to be some unnecessary barriers when trying to acquire forest inventory information."

"As a licensee access to data is difficult and bureaucratic.... However, once access is arranged the LRDW actually works quite efficiently."

"It is very difficult to access data."

6.9 Delivery Model, Roles, Coordination

Some feel the FIA delivery model using DFAM groups at the management unit level basically works and has improved with recent changes by the Forest Investment Council related to inventory funding. Others feel the delivery model needs to be more fundamentally changed. Some comments note the importance of a collaborative delivery model that fosters and supports stable funding through collective buy-in. One view put forward was to provide specified funds for industry to address their inventory needs, with other funds specified for government to address their additional needs.

Local management unit-level coordination is supported to help ensure the inventory is in fact useful to industry to support business tasks and that there is local-level buy-in and support for needed inventory work. Comments note the importance of providing incentives, such as via IFPAs, to ensure that funds needed for inventory are secured. There is some recognition that the participation in management unit level LBIR processes about inventory needs could be improved — for example, by involving inventory staff along with licensees and BCTS.

Others are concerned that the licensee interest in addressing inventory needs may not equate to the public interest to do so (i.e., there are many other users) and that province-wide coordination of inventory is needed with government having more of a hand in setting priorities. Some suggest that improved coordination can be more effectively done using regional centres or at the district level. Some note that management unit decisions with inventory expertise sometimes results in inefficient decisions. The example offered was where a re-inventory was supported and paid for using FIA funding when in fact a robust inventory update for disturbance was all that was needed.

There is a common desire to clarify the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the inventory at both the agency-level (MOFR, ILMB, MOE, etc,), relative to licensees/BCTS and with respect to consultants. Key questions are — who decides inventory priorities, who pays for the inventory, who owns the inventory, who is responsible for the inventory and its condition, who sets the standards, who should do quality assurance and audits, who should manage inventory contracts, who conducts inventory projects, who updates the inventory due to forest and non-forest uses like oil and gas, etc? Regarding who actually does the inventory, some responses indicate that inventory work should remain where capacity exists, namely with the consulting sector and that contract management standards (e.g., open bidding) be set to foster competitive capacity.

Clarifying all of these different roles and responsibilities will help to inform the delivery model discussion. For example, a number of responses feel that government is ultimately responsible for the state of the inventory and therefore it needs to play an important role in deciding inventory priorities and setting standards. The suggestion is that this be done in partnership with key stakeholders like forest licensees.

Others feel Phase 1 and 2 of the VRI should be managed by industry with co-administration support from MOFR at the regional level, but with specialized programs such as site index/productivity, G&Y and NVAF being administered provincially by the MoFR.

There is a similar desire to clarify roles and responsibilities within specified organizations. For example, within MOFR, what are the roles of Branch, regional and district staff? Some responses suggest district MOFR staff be more involved in the inventory to help improve its accuracy, ensure its access and proper use (operationally) and to assist with updating.

6.10 Incremental Improvements, Technology, Innovation

Several responses believe that we need to better utilize remote sensing technology to improve the inventory and identify barriers to moving forward. Some responses note the need to exercise caution in the use of new technologies to ensure that they are in fact cost-effective. Other responses include:

- the need to embrace new technology where it is cost effective and provides better resultant data needed at the sub-strategic level, with concern expressed that inflexible adherence to RISC standards has been a barrier to innovation for unique challenges, like mapping MPB infestation levels;
- that satellite imagery should be considered for updates with district staff providing some limited ground sample verification;
- that the lack of capacity and expertise has sorely limited staff to even consider innovative approaches in the past;
- that VRI standards are an impediment to improving the inventory using new creative approaches and that there is the need for pilot projects;
- that standards that control the process for doing inventory rather than outcomes is a barrier to innovatively improve the inventory;

- that VRI be reviewed when completed to assess weaknesses and gaps with targeted projects that address those concerns leading to small, annual incremental projects that enable the inventory to be continuously improved;
- that we target projects to known issues in the inventory rather than doing more than that (e.g., if inventory is old and needs to updated for disturbance, that we use satellite imagery to do that and not do a complete new inventory);
- the use of cruise plots and other known point data to improve the inventory;
- improving G&Y models as they apply to inventory attributes;
- streamlining the content requirements for VRI to ensure "core" needs are met; and
- consider using a modeling approach to Phase 1 polygon delineation (similar to PEM) with Phase 2 ground samples and monitoring assessing the delineations.

6.11 Value of Inventory Information

A prevailing view is that the inventory has huge value and provides fundamental information for resource management and therefore needs adequate funding. For example, AAC determinations which have substantial ramifications for the provincial and local economy, including jobs and revenue, rely heavily on accurate inventory information including G&Y plus site index/productivity.

It is further noted by several responses that the value of the inventory is not fully appreciated and that it is underutilized relative to its potential to support a diversity of business needs. It was emphasized that VRI is one important inventory among several that need to be linked and used with other information systems in order for it to be used most effectively.

At the same time, there is concern with the accuracy of the inventory particularly as it is used increasingly for sub-strategic applications. This strongly indicates that there is a need to make the inventory more accurate at the watershed-level and that it is kept up-to-date to support these spatial modeling and planning uses. Tied to this reality is the concern that the inventory is being misused at the operational level for stand-level decision-making for which it was never designed to support (e.g. stand-level cruises should do this). Proper communication is needed to make this clear.

6.12 Capacity, Succession, Training

There is a strongly held view that the lack of adequate capacity, succession planning and training are substantial barriers to improving the inventory program. Several responses note that the root cause of this is inadequate and unstable funding. Very simply, it is suggested that the capacity will build and people will be trained if they know there is work out there. It is pointed out that the lack of interest in training in the past is because there have been relatively few inventory projects and therefore few jobs and consulting opportunities.

With more funding and projects, more interest in training can be expected. It is acknowledged that the number of skilled and trained inventory specialists has dwindled due to down-sizing and lack of funding in government and industry. A number of respondents feel that the critical

mass still exists to ramp up to the challenge to revitalize the inventory, however they point out that secure long-term (e.g., 10 year) funding may be needed to facilitate this re-growth.

As with many programs, inventory is faced with an aging workforce where seasoned employees and consultants will soon be lost to retirement. Clearly there is a need for better succession planning. This must include a plan to capture and transfer existing know-how to new employees. Thought will also have to be given to how to attract employees to the inventory business area.

6.13 Preliminary Inventory Issues Identified by FAIB Inventory Staff

There were relatively few responses to this item. Some feedback indicated agreement with the issues raised while a few comments disagreed with some of the issues raised. Responses included:

- belief that business drivers come and go and therefore the need to develop a long-term vision for the inventory;
- need to support strategic and sub-strategic-level uses such as planning;
- disagreement with the view that the existing delivery model is not working noting the Branch staff can be involved in the process and that the real concern is less the model but more the provision of adequate funding;
- that consultants should be "doing" the inventories not government staff; that "non-timber" VRI attributes often have not been sampled because there is little value to justify the additional expense;
- that it is not necessary for government to set standards for the inventory, oversee quality assurance and audits, or to set priorities for inventory work – that these tasks can be done by the private sector with more streamlined involved by government;
- that downsizing, loss of corporate memory and succession challenges are not just government issues, but also impact industry and consulting – and that assured funding is needed to provide adequate capacity;
- that the VRI standard needs to be revisited to better address business needs and the delivery of a sustainable program; and
- that linkages are needed to other data sets like cruising to help improve the inventory.

6.14 Are there other points you would like to make?

Feedback included:

- the need to better address forest health issues in the inventory and be responsive to climate change;
- identify barriers to moving forward, substitutes, strengths, opportunities or weakness;
- revisit the VRI standard due to concern that it is a 'Cadillac' standard which may be a disservice relative to supporting overall business needs;

- upgrade the forest cover inventory to VRI standard and concern why this has not happened in many areas;
- recognize that all funding decisions are about 'balance' so that funding directed at inventory does not impact funding needs in other areas;
- concern that the program consists of silos that need to work more closely together.

One respondent listed 14 specific points which are itemized in the separate *Challenge Paper Consolidated Feedback* document.

Action for Participants #8

Please use the separate IPR Progress Report Feedback Form to provide any further reactions you have to responses to the Critical Questions the Challenge Paper.

Next Steps

The following provides an approximate chart of the next steps in the IPR.

1. If you wish to provide feedback to this Progress Report it is **due on May 17, 2006**. Please use the separate ***IPR Progress Report Feedback Form*** provided on the website and send it by email attachment to mailto:forests.forestanalysisbranchoffice@gov.bc.ca. Your responses will be used to further shape the design of the Workshop and its supporting Workshop Workbook.
2. A Workshop Workbook will be prepared to complement and inform the Workshop process. We hope to have the Workbook completed a day or two ahead of the Workshop and sent you electronically. The Workbook will also be posted on the IPR website. Hard copies of the Workbook will be available for you at the Workshop as will some copies of the original Challenge Paper, the Consolidated Responses to the Challenge Paper and the Progress Report. Please bring your own copies of these documents if you have made your own notes.
3. The IPR Workshop starts on May 24th at 9AM and will end no later than 4PM on May 25th. The Workshop is by invitation (no drop-ins please) and is being held at the Executive Inn, Richmond. Please see your Workshop invitation for further details. Please confirm your attendance with Don Gosnell (don.gosnell@gov.bc.ca) if you have not done so already.
4. A Workshop Synopsis prepared by early June and will be posted on the IPR website with email notification.
5. "Issue/Opportunity Teams" will carry-on completing their assignments following the Workshop. They will identify action-options and develop their respective business cases in early summer.
6. The Issue/Opportunity Team outputs will be synthesized and packaged into a consistent set of recommendations for MOFR executive and other executive groups such as FIC by mid-summer.

In closing, the Action Team wishes to thank you for your continued interest and ideas regarding this important Dialogue.

Action for Participants #9

Please use the separate IPR Progress Report Feedback Form to provide any questions you may have about the Next Steps or other comments you would like to make.